



What Every Consumer Should Know:

Drug Advertisements

Informed consumers are empowered consumers—they tend to seek treatment early, know about medications and their potential side effects, and are actively involved in their care. California Health Decisions research shows that one-third of those surveyed under age 65 said that they have asked their physician about a specific prescription medication that they saw advertised on television or in a magazine.

Before you talk with your physician about a medication advertisement you have seen or read, think about these six important questions:

- Have I been diagnosed with the condition or symptom the medication is intended to treat?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Have I talked with my doctor about this condition or symptom?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Am I currently taking medication for this condition or symptom?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is the medication I am currently taking effective in managing my condition or alleviating my symptom(s)?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- If no, why not?
☐ Symptoms persist
☐ Causes unpleasant side effects.
☐ Other _____
- I may want to switch to, or add a medication I have seen advertised because:
☐ The ad was convincing.
☐ A friend or family member with a similar symptom or condition has told me the medication is working well for them.
☐ My current medication isn't managing my symptoms optimally.
☐ I want to be sure that if a newer, more effective medication becomes available, I have the opportunity to take it.
☐ Other _____

Prescription drug advertising is designed to create a demand for a specific product as well as educate consumers on the treatments available for various conditions and diseases. Organizing your thoughts about these questions will help you to have a careful and productive dialogue with your physician about the best possible medication choices for you.